United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Special Envoy for Haiti says President Aristide has agreed to meet with Haitian Armed Forces to resolve Haitian crisis; says Council sanctions played very important role in bringing about meeting.

+ UNOSOM II says leaflets are being distributed to Somali people offering reward for arrest of General Aidid or information on his whereabouts.

+ Secretary-General pays one-day working visit to Bonn; meets with German Chancellor, Foreign Minister and Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development.

+ Commission on Sustainable Development begins two-day high-level meeting attended by environment and development ministers from more than 40 countries.

+ UNHCR expresses concern over United States Supreme Court decision on return of Haitian refugees; says governments are obliged not to return refugees to persecution whether inside or outside borders.

+ Economic and Social Council to discuss 1995 World Summit for Social Development at special meeting in Geneva; will consider Secretary-General's report on United Nations role in social development.

+ World Conference on Human Rights considers draft resolution urging world community to assume responsibility for peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina; Iraq says blockade against it violates human rights as it has fulfilled all obligations imposed by Security Council.

+ United Nations Commissioner-General signs Participation Contract with Chairman of Taejon International Exposition Organizing Committee.

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For information media--not an official record

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The Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Haiti, Dante Caputo, today announced that President Jean-Bertrand Aristide had agreed to meet with representatives of the Haitian Armed Forces with a view to resolving the Haitian crisis. Mr. Caputo recalled that General Raoul Cedras, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, had already agreed to a meeting. Details regarding the time and place were being worked out.

Mr. Caputo described the meeting as "a very important step", adding that negotiations had been a goal of Security Council resolution 841 (1993). Under that resolution, the Council decided that oil and arms sanctions would be applied against Haiti today in an effort to restore constitutional rule there.

Mr. Caputo said the sanctions had played a very important role in bringing about the meeting. He stressed that the international community would make every effort to help the negotiations, but that success would depend on the will of the parties.

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Leaflets are being distributed to the Somali people offering a reward for the arrest of General Mohamed Farah Aidid or information on his whereabouts, a spokesman for the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) said today. The leaflets, in the Somali language, were being distributed by hand today and would be dropped by helicopter tomorrow, weather permitting.

The University compound adjacent to UNOSOM II buildings came under sniper fire this morning, and 6 Somalis may have been killed or injured by return fire from Tunisian and United States forces, the spokesman said. No UNOSOM II casualties were reported.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today paid a one-day working visit to Bonn. He was met at the airport by Germany's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, the Acting Chief of Protocol, and the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, who had attended German court hearings on participation by German troops in the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II).

At noon, the Secretary-General met with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, and discussed the situations in Somalia and the former Yugoslavia, and relations between Germany and the United Nations. He had a working lunch with the German Foreign Minister, and discussed the court hearings relating to Somalia and Germany's interests in the United Nations, including its aspiration for a permanent Security Council seat. They also discussed the situations in Somalia, the former Yugoslavia, Africa and Cambodia. Before returning to Geneva, he met with Germany's Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development.

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The Commission on Sustainable Development today began a two-day high-level meeting to consider the outcome of discussion on the issues before its first session. Environment and development ministers from more than 40 countries are participating in the meeting.

Denmark's Environment Minister said the Commission should become a "Security Council for the environment", serving as a political forum for the implementation of "Agenda 21", the plan of action adopted by last year's United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). Australia's Environment Minister said the environment issue was as important as international peace and security and the global economy. The high-level meeting must ensure the success of the UNCED process and counter the sense that political imperatives had been submerged in dialogue in the past year.

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has expressed serious concern over the United States Supreme Court's decision upholding the summary return of Haitian refugees. The Court's ruling that the international law prohibiting the return of refugees to persecution did not have extra-territorial effect was "a setback to modern international refugee law", and made UNHCR's work more difficult, according to a UNHCR statement.

UNHCR said that it had submitted a "friend-of-the-court" brief last December taking the position that summarily repatriating refugees to a place where their lives or freedom would be threatened was contrary to applicable international refugee treaties and to the principle of "non-return" of refugees. The obligation not to return refugees to persecution arose irrespective of whether governments acted within or outside their borders, the statement stressed.

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The World Summit for Social Development and the United Nations role in promoting social development will be the main topic of discussion at a special meeting of the Economic and Social Council, to be held from 28 to 30 June in Geneva. It will be the Council's first high-level discussion of preparations for the Summit, which will be held during the Organization's fiftieth anniversary year in 1995. The Summit will be the first meeting of world Heads of State or Government to confront the issues of poverty, unemployment and social disintegration.

The Council will consider the Secretary-General's report entitled "World Summit for Social Development, including the role of the United Nations system in promoting social development". The Secretary-General recently said that peace and development were indivisible, and that conflicts were caused by disappointed economic hopes. In his 1992 report on the work of the United Nations, he said the Summit would inspire a more comprehensive approach to United Nations action in the social sphere.

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The World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna is considering a draft resolution urging the world community to assume full responsibility for restoring peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The draft would have the Conference categorically reject the proposed partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina and call for the lifting of the arms embargo against it. The draft follows an appeal by the Bosnian Foreign Minister to the Conference to call on the Security Council to stop the "genocide" in his country.

Iraq's Justice Minister yesterday told the Conference that the "blockade" against his country was a flagrant violation of human rights, as it had fulfilled all the obligations imposed on it by the Security Council. The policy of influential Council members on the Kurdish question threatened Iraq's territorial integrity, he said, adding that the escalation of interference in the internal affairs of States threatened the foundations of modern international relations.

The Foreign Minister of Bhutan said the right to self-determination should not be used to undermine the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States. A representative of the Interparliamentary Union said there could be no democracy if people could not meet basic food and shelter requirements. All individuals should be allowed to participate freely in the economic, social and political lives of their countries, he stressed.

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A Participation Contract between the United Nations and the Taejon International Exposition Organizing Committee was signed yesterday in Taejon, Republic of Korea, by the United Nations Commissioner-General, Eugeniusz Wyzner, and the Chairman of the Organizing Committee, Myung Oh. The signing completes the legal process and establishes the framework for United Nations participation in the Exposition..

The Exposition, which will run from 7 August to 7 November, is the first of its kind to be hosted by a developing country. Some 112 countries will participate in the event which has as its central theme, "The Challenge of a New Road to Development".

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